

## AGENDA ITEM SUMMARY

Division: Growth Management

Department: Marine Resources

Revised 2/27/01

**Department of Marine Resources**  
2798 Overseas Highway, Suite 420  
Marathon, Florida 33050  
Phone: (305) 289-2805  
Voice: (305) 289-2536  
Jones-Rich@Monroecounty-fl.gov



**Board of County Commissioners**  
Mayor Dixie M. Spehar, Dist. 1  
Mayor Pro Tem Sonny McCoy, Dist. 3  
Comm. George Neugent, Dist. 2  
Comm. David P. Rice, Dist. 4  
Comm. Murray E. Nelson, Dist. 5

## PRELIMINARY WORK SCOPE

### Introduction

Monroe County is experiencing the loss of, and redevelopment of, marine facilities at an unprecedented rate. Escalating property values and associated property taxes appear to be a driving force behind the sale and redevelopment of many important waterfront non-residential properties. Of concern is the loss of commercial marinas, and particularly the 'working waterfront' including: boatyards, wet and dry storage, fish houses, and commercial fishing vessel dockage. These facilities are not only important to the local economy, but have historical and cultural significance as well.

There is great concern that if nothing is done to control this redevelopment that future losses of waterfront facilities will negatively affect the economy and bring an end to critical marine service industries (e.g. boatyards), commercial marinas which are available to the public, and traditional trades associated with the community character (e.g. commercial fishing). The current trend is a transition to non-water dependent uses (e.g. condos) and exclusive marinas (e.g. private mega-yacht marinas). Related to the redevelopment issue is concern for public water access and the loss of boat ramps and dockage currently provided at many of the boat yards and marinas.

The effects of losing a single boatyard may be quite substantial, particularly in Stock Island where the only facility capable of servicing large vessels (including the commercial fishing fleet) is located. Many losses of facilities have already been observed in the upper and middle Keys. Without boatyards to service their vessels, many boat captains will have to look elsewhere for service (i.e. Havana, Miami, Tampa), or may leave the industry altogether.

The Stock Island-Key Haven Livable CommuniKeys Master Plan, currently in development, has identified public concern for the loss of the 'working waterfront'. Both the Board of County Commissioners and the citizens they represent have indicated the highest priority for addressing the above described redevelopment situation. In addition, there is concern at the regional and state levels for the loss of marine facilities and public water access.

### Mandate

On 18 August 2004 the Monroe County Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) held their regular meeting and discussed the issue of the loss of 'working waterfronts'. The Board listened to several speakers (both government staff and private citizens) provide information indicating the current trend for waterfront property owners to redevelop existing marine and fishing related facilities to non-water dependant uses, gated private marinas and other uses that will both directly and indirectly affect the

relatively diversified economy and traditional activities and livelihoods of the Keys. The BOCC directed staff to have a public water access and marine facilities plan prepared for Monroe County.

### **Objectives**

- Acquire socio-economic data on existing waterfront marine facilities, analyze the data, and evaluate the importance of the 'working waterfront' both economically and culturally
- Determine the potential effects of recent and current proposed redevelopment of commercial waterfront facilities
- Work and cooperate with other entities studying the issues (i.e. the Marine Industries Association of South Florida; the Florida Senate Committee on Comprehensive Planning)
- Research and provide a wide option of recommendations and management strategies for implementation, including creative solutions, to preserve the 'working waterfront'
- Focus measures/recommendations not only at the County level, but also the State level to provide for the highest level of legislative representation and assistance

### **Methodology & Data Collection**

- Examine the culture and context of working waterfronts by region (lower, middle and upper keys)
- Inventory pertinent waterfront facility locations and identify specific waterfront uses
- Identify undeveloped/potential working waterfront sites
- Acquire socio-economic data utilizing existing or current project data as available to allow for budgetary constraints. Existing and current project data may be used in addition to collecting new survey and/or interview format data, providing a mixed approach so as to allow a time and cost effective comprehensive data acquisition program. Socio-economic data surveys should include, but not be limited to: marinas, boatyards, fish houses, commercial fishing dockage, other commercial dockage, wet/dry storage facilities, and boat ramps. Available data sources may include, but not be limited to: existing reports, studies, plans, interviews with key stake holders, GIS data, tax roll information, zoning information, existing CommuniKeys reports, fisheries catch information, etc.
- Analyze current working waterfront economic contribution/distribution in both local and regional contexts
- Describe and illustrate future scenarios given certain trends or directions and market forces (ex: if primary economic driver is a downturn in fishing industry or upswing in tourism and residential units/residents not needing 'white-collar' employment opportunities, etc.)
- Examine 'dockage to dinner plate' relationship to local & regional economies including tourism and associated impacts
- Conduct cursory examination of communities with similar characteristics facing similar challenges

Data collected should be provided in a format usable in ArcMap GIS, as applicable. Also, marina inventory and other demographic data should be collected and provided in a context which allows the data to be utilized towards meeting the Comprehensive Plan Objective 212.4 (Marina Siting Study).

### **Products/Deliverables**

Provide a comprehensive 'Marine Management Plan' (Report) to include, but not limited to:

- A brief overview of the history and importance of commercial waterfront facilities in the Keys, including a definition/description of the term 'working waterfront' as it applies to Monroe County.
- A complete description of the objectives
- A complete description of the methodology
- A complete description of any analyses
- A complete description of the results
- A comprehensive discussion section providing an overview of the issues, trends, data, and results. The section should paint an overview of the recent past, present and future in regards to the 'working waterfront' and how it affects the economy and community character of the Keys.
- A comprehensive list of management strategies and recommendations, including but not limited to: public/private partnerships, tax incentives, tax abatements, development right purchasing, Land Development Regulation changes and/or Comprehensive Plan amendments, etc. This comprehensive list may be organized or categorized according to types or modes of direction for the County to choose from, etc.
- Appendices including all acquired data, references, literature research, and any other pertinent information

The final Report should also detail and describe any cooperative and/or collaborative efforts at the regional and state levels.

### **Timeline**

The Board of County Commissioners and the Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary have recognized the urgency of the situation with the loss of 'working waterfronts'. The Department has been directed to address this situation immediately. The Department would like the study and accompanying recommendations completed within nine months.